

Message Text

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45

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 USSS-00 OPR-02 SY-10 OC-06 CCO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 USIE-00

DRC-01 AF-10 /161 W

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O 081420Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1192

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 1496

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 10792

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR XF, XI CGEN

SUBJECT: GREEK-FLAG CRUISE SHIP WITH U.S. CIT. PASSENGERS
BEING HELD IN SYRIAN PORT

REF: STATE 199662; ROME 10780.

1. ON OCT. 8, RESPONSIBLE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL
CONVEYED SUBSTANCE OF TELEGRAM JUST RECEIVED
FROM ITALIAN EMBASSY DAMASCUS RE U.S. CITIZEN
PASSENGERS EMBARKED ON GREEK-FLAG CRUISE SHIP "ROMANTICA", WHICH
DETAINED BY SYRIANS IN TARTUS.

2. UPON RECEIPT OF FON MIN'S OCT. 7 INSTRUCTIONS
(ROME REFTTEL), ITALIAN EMBASSY HAD CONTACTED HONORARY ITALIAN
CONSUL (A SYRIAN NATIONAL) IN LATAKIA, ASKING THAT HE IMMEDIATELY
REPORT ON SITUATION OF "ROMANTICA" PASSENGERS.

3. CONSUL SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED THAT ALL US CITS IN EXCELLENT
HEALTH. ACCORDING CONSUL, "ROMANTICA" WAS DIVERTED TO TARTUS BY
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SYRIANS BECAUSE SHIP IN "WAR ZONE"; WAS BEING DETAINED ONLY FOR

REASONS OF SAFETY; AND WAS AWAITING SYRIAN DECISION TO RELEASE. CONSUL SAID OTHER SHIPS ALSO BEING DETAINED BY SYRIANS FOR REASONS OF SAFETY. (COMMENT: IT NOT RPT NOT CLEAR FROM ITALIAN MESSAGE WHETHER HONORARY CONSUL ACTUALLY TRAVELED TO TARTUS OR RECEIVED INFO BY PHONE.)

4. ITALIAN EMBASSY MESSAGE NOTED THAT SINCE SHIP UNDER GREEK REGISTRY, CASE BEING FOLLOWED IN "FIRST INSTANCE" BY GREEK EMBASSY DAMASCUS. MESSAGE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT "OTHER THAN WAR RISKS", U.S. CITS EXPOSED TO NO RPT NO OTHER RISKS BECAUSE OF THEIR NATIONALITY. ACCORDING ITALIAN INFORMATION, ALL PASSENGERS REMAIN ON BOARD, AND ARE NOT RPT NOT PERMITTED TO LAND.

5. ITALIAN EMBASSY CABLE CONCLUDED THAT EMBASSY AND HONORABLE CONSUL WOULD CONTINUE TO FOLLOW MATTER CLOSELY.

6. WE POINTED OUT TO FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL THAT ITALIAN EMBASSY MESSAGE DID NOT RPT NOT INDICATE ANY APPROACH TO SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY RE "ROMANTICA" PASSENGERS AS REQUESTED BY USG AND AS INSTRUCTED BY FOREIGN MINISTRY. OFFICIAL RESPONDED THAT MESSAGE REPORTED FIRST AND IMMEDIATE ITALIAN EFFORT TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON MATTER, AND HE EXPECTED FOLLOW-UP CABLE REPORTING FURTHER ACTION TAKEN BY EMBASSY IN RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTIONS.
BEAUDRY

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